



The Minster School

Religious Studies Policy

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| Approved by: | David Shannon | Date: 27/01/2026 |
| Chair of Governors | | |
| School Lead | Deputy Head Teacher (Worship) | |
| Last reviewed on: | Spring 2026 | |
| Next review due by: | Spring 2028 | |

Succeeding Together

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord" Colossians 3:23

Religious Studies Policy

Background:

The Minster School is a Church of England Academy school with approximately 1650 students on role between the ages of 7 and 18. It has an historical link with Southwell Minster and supports the education of choristers for the Cathedral. There are 55 Foundation places given to students who are regular worshippers within Church of England churches.

Links to school ethos:

Religious Studies is a fundamental part of our school curriculum. It is essential in allowing students to explore the spiritual dimensions to life. It also helps develop students' moral, social and cultural education as well as exploring our fundamental British values. In doing so it helps students to succeed both academically, morally and spiritually, embodying what we mean by 'succeeding together'.

Roles / Responsibilities:

Deputy Head Teacher - Curriculum: Andy Wall

Curriculum Team Leader - Religious Studies: Helen Feehily

Junior School Lead for Religious Studies: Derrick Dring

Links to other relevant policies:

Marking and Feedback policy

RSHE policy

Overview:

As a Church of England school we believe that Religious studies is fundamentally important to students' academic and spiritual development. It helps to promote our British values of Mutual respect, Tolerance and Individual liberty and ensures that students gain a broad understanding of different beliefs, cultures and practices. It also enables them to develop and voice their own beliefs and values in a respectful and considerate manner, embodying what we mean by Succeeding Together. This is demonstrated through the teaching of GCSE Religious Studies to all students and by providing Religious Studies for all A Level students through the Faith, Culture and Life course which is taught in Year 12.

Our Curriculum:

Our curriculum follows Nottinghamshire's locally agreed syllabus at Key Stages 2-3 and the GCSE and A Level AQA and OCR curriculums respectively at Key Stages 4-5. Within this, students are given the opportunity to reflect on a range of beliefs and views from around the world and use them to form and express their own opinions. As a Church of England school our curriculum is centred on exploring the Christian faith but is also designed to be inclusive and diverse in its approach. In doing so students will explore all 6 major world religions and different ways of worshipping within them.

Junior School

Our curriculum is rooted in both the *Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus*, (through which our multifaith and non-religious world views are scaffolded) and *Understanding Christianity* which provides the framework for all units of Christianity.

We follow the aims of the Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus (NAS) for Religious Education that children should:

- know about and understand a range of religions and world views,
- express and communicate ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and world views
- gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and world views.

Our discrete subject lessons have an intention of highlighting the relevance of RS in today's modern world and how it affects our lives.

Throughout Key Stage 2, children develop a deep understanding of Christianity and also make connections between this and other faiths (Islam, Judaism and Hinduism).

We ensure we challenge children's rapidly developing minds through philosophical debate, theological questioning and glimpses into the real lives of people of faith around the world. We aim to equip our children with enquiry skills that enable critical thinking, a skill which transcends the world of Religious Studies.

Year 7

The curriculum aims to provide lessons which are engaging and balanced and encourage students to independently think about their own points of view. At the start of each unit students are given an enquiry question and a relevant quote from a religious text. The enquiry question is the end point assessment which students will answer. All lessons also have a 'Big question' displayed which points to the end point of the lesson.

Year 8

Students in year 8 are able to continue to build on the skills that they have developed in year 7 and are encouraged to extend their knowledge to think about how a religious person puts their beliefs into action and to continue to look at different religions and what it means to live in Britain as a diverse society. As with year 7, students are given enquiry questions and quotes at the beginning of each unit as well as Big questions at the start of all lessons.

Year 9

Students in lessons continue to build on their knowledge and skills from years 7 and 8 thinking further about their own beliefs and values and looking at more philosophical and ethical questions. Year 9 students begin the GCSE after Easter, whilst still ensuring full coverage of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, the order of which has been chosen for students to build on their prior knowledge of Christianity which in turn will lead on to the Thematic studies papers.

Year 10

Through the Thematic paper students are given the opportunity to tackle and contemplate philosophical and ethical questions that are relevant in the world today. Students study these from Christian and Islamic perspectives and consider their own views alongside this.

Year 11

Students develop their skills further by looking at the beliefs and practices of the chosen second religion, Islam. Students get the opportunity to learn about Islam as a world religion and the way Muslims worship and practice their religion.

Year 12 & 13

All students in Year 12 follow a course on Religious Studies called Faith, Culture and Life. This focusses on a variety of topical issues linked to religious belief and encourages students to critically reflect and question different belief systems, values and their own opinions. A range of moral and ethical issues are included within the programme which runs in timetabled lessons throughout the year.

Student may also choose to study A Level Religious Studies as one of their 3 options.

The A Level curriculum follows the OCR exam board and is split into three topics which enable students to have a good knowledge of philosophical, ethical and theological issues.

For more details on content covered see Appendices A & B

Parental rights to withdraw:

As a Church of England school with a strong Christian ethos that underpins the whole of school life it is expected that all students desiring to study here will wish to participate fully in the Religious Studies programme that is offered. Notwithstanding this, the legal right to withdraw students from Religious Studies remains. Parents have the right to request that their child be withdrawn from part or all, of the Religious Studies curriculum. Any such request should be submitted to the Head Teacher in writing.

Assessment in Religious Studies:

Students are assessed in different ways in lessons. Their understanding is assessed through questioning, extended written tasks and other independent learning tasks. Formal assessments occur at the end of each unit and are marked as per policy and written feedback given. Targets are given to students and time is built into lessons for them to reflect and respond.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Studies will be subject to the established QA practices operating within the school. This includes regular work sampling, student voice, lesson visits and learning walks.

Appendix A

Religious Studies topic overview

Junior school

| Term | YEAR 3/4 CYCLE A | YEAR 3/4 CYCLE B | YEAR 5/6 CYCLE A | YEAR 5/6 CYCLE B |
|-----------------|---|---|---|--|
| Autumn 1 | Symbols and Religious expression 4.2 Islam, Hinduism, Christianity | Creation/Fall: What do Christians learn from the Creation story? | Gospel: What would Jesus do? | Inspirational people from today's world 5:1 Various Religions including Sikhism and Judaism |
| Autumn 2 | Gospel: What kind of world did Jesus want? | Festivals of light: How do people of different religions celebrate major events and how is the symbol of light important? Christmas, Diwali, Hannukah, Eid | Kingdom of God: What kind of king is Jesus? | Beliefs in action in the world 6:4 What was the Kindertransport? Who resisted and rescued? How can we be Upstanders today? Judaism |
| Spring 1 | Religion, family and Community: Prayer 3.2 Christians and Muslims | Incarnation/God: 'What is the Trinity?' | Beliefs and Questions 5.3 Islam and Hinduism | Incarnation: Was Jesus the Messiah? |
| Spring 2 | Why is Easter and Holy Week so important to Christians? | Salvation: Why do Christians call the day Jesus died Good Friday? | Salvation: What did Jesus do to save human beings? | Salvation: What difference does the resurrection make to Christians? |
| Summer 1 | Kingdom of God: When Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost? | Religion, family, community, worship, celebration, ways of living 4.4 Hinduism | Beliefs in Action in the World 5:4 Christianity, Islam, Hinduism | How do religions and beliefs respond to global issues of human rights, social justice and the importance of the environment? Christianity, Hinduism, Humanism |
| Summer 2 | People of God: What is it like to follow God? | Worship and Sacred Places 3.3 Muslims, Hindus, Christians | Creation and Science: conflicting or complimentary? | People of God: How can following God bring freedom and justice? |

Key stage 3

Year 7

- Where did the universe come from?
- The Life of Jesus
- Christian worship – prayer, communion and baptism
- Judaism
- Islam
- Ultimate questions – students devise a high-order enquiry question and complete a project

Year 8

- Faith in Action – Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Gandhi.
- Christian's Responsibility to the Environment.
- Hinduism
- Sikhism
- Prejudice and Human Rights
- Christianity and Non-Religious Belief

Year 9

- Buddhism – Faith and beliefs
- Christianity, Religion, and the Media
- Christianity, prejudice and human rights
- GCSE – Christian beliefs and practices.

Key stage 4

Year 10

- Christian Practices
- Relationships and families
- Religion, Peace and Conflict
- Religion and life
- Crime and Punishment

Year 11

- Islamic beliefs
- Islamic practices

Key stage 5

Faith, Culture and Life

- Religious freedom – Cults or religion
- Scientology and me
- Extremism and Religion
- Death Penalty
- Euthanasia
- Resilience
- Sexual Harassment
- Genetic manipulation
- Organ Donation
- Gender dysphoria and Transgender
- Globalisation
- Factfulness
- Faith Healing
- Ethics of war
- Independent research

Year 12 Philosophy

- Ancient Philosophical Influences.
- Soul, mind and body.
- Arguments based on observation.
- Arguments based on reason.
- Religious Experience
- The Problem of Evil.

Christian development in thought.

- Augustine's teachings on human nature.
- Death and the Afterlife.
- Knowledge of God's existence.

Year 12 Ethics

- Situation Ethics.
- Utilitarianism.
- Natural Law.
- Kantian Ethics.
- Applied Ethics: Euthanasia
- Applied Ethics: Business
- Conscience

Christian development in thought.

- The person of Jesus Christ.
- Christian moral principles.
- Christian moral actions.

Year 13 Philosophy

- The Nature and Attributes of God
- Religious Language: negative, analogical or symbolic.
- Religious language: twentieth century perspectives and philosophical comparisons.

Christian development in thought.

- Religious pluralism and theology
- Religious pluralism and society
- Gender and society

Year 13 Ethics

- Recap of theories
- Sexual Ethics
- Meta- ethical theories

Christian development in thought

- Gender and theology
- The challenge of secularism
- Liberation theology and Marx

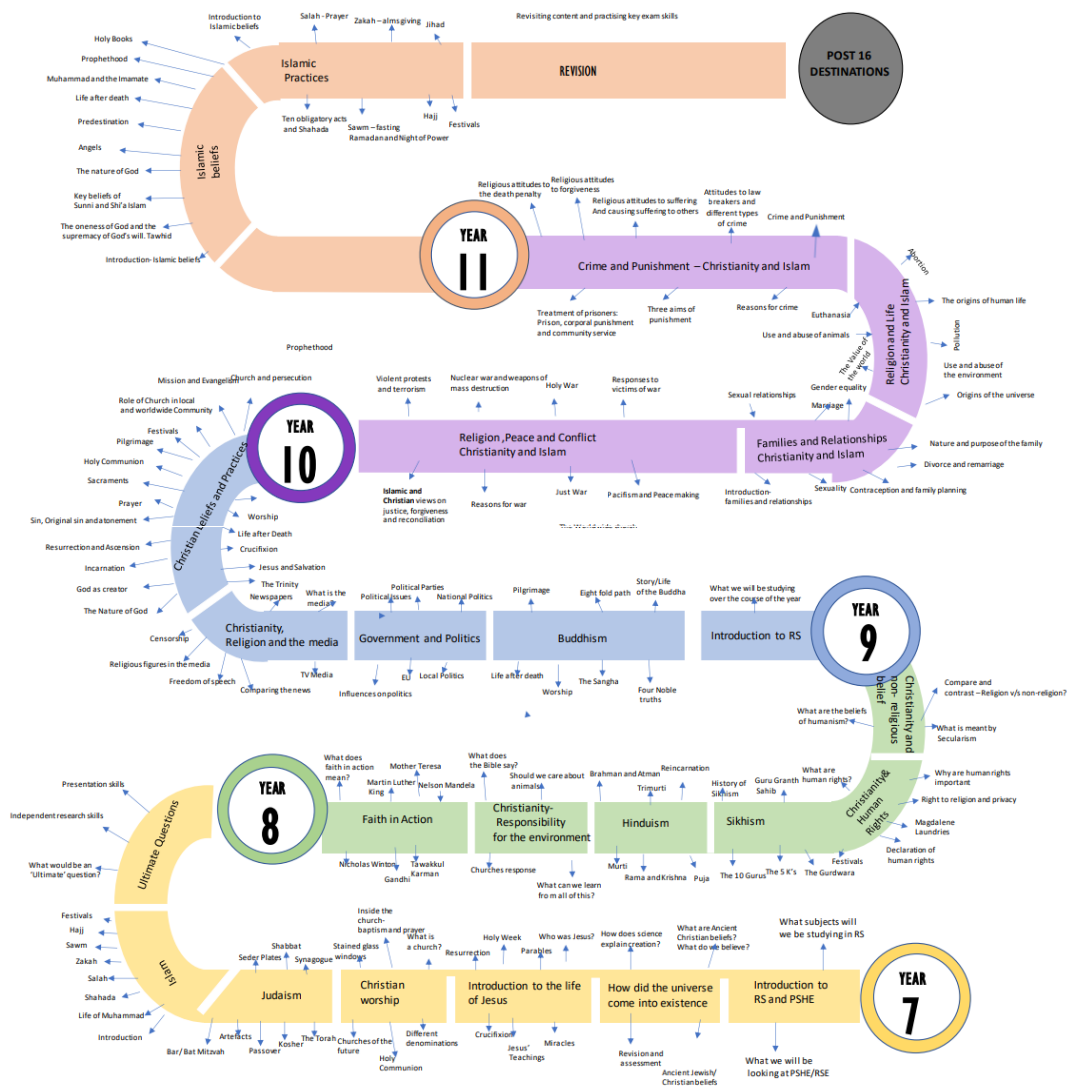
Appendix B

Religious Studies Journey



Succeeding Together

The learning of Religious Studies prepares students for life as global citizens encouraging respect for all, global learning, British values and community cohesion which is significant for their progression through life.



“Whatever you do, work at it with your whole heart, as though you were working for the Lord.” Colossians 3:23